

THE PROBLEM OF THE JEW

Zionism, the Movement Back to Jerusalem and What Is Causing It.

Zionism, that is, the movement throughout the world having for its object the formation of a Jewish state in Palestine, has received a powerful impetus from the recent congress of the Zionists at Basle. It is now predicted that the movement will receive the support of a majority of the Jews in Europe and also make an impression upon the Jews of America. The delegates have returned to their respective homes and will at once push forward the work of making converts to the cause in all parts of the world.

The arguments for and against the formation of the Jewish state have called forth a little controversy on both sides of the Atlantic. Dr. Theodore Herzl is the leader of the movement in Europe, with Max Nordau, author of "Degeneration," as a powerful ally. Dr. Herzl is credited with being the author of the scheme, and for this reason, now that the Basle congress has been so successful, he has been called the "modern Moses," who is to lead the children of Israel back to Jerusalem, in accordance with the biblical prophecies of the return of the race. However, the Bible utterances on this point are not cited by the Zionists as necessarily justifying the movement. Rather do they justify it on the grounds of expediency and the economic welfare of the race, and also as solving the vexatious problems arising from the wave of anti-Semitism, which has arisen in so many parts of the world.

Dr. Herzl was the dominating force in the congress at Basle. While Nordau and others assisted in making the deliberations, Herzl carried them through the dangerous phases. And the delegates evidently appreciated this, for while they applauded Nordau they fairly worshipped Herzl. At moments when orthodox and liberals seemed at the point of throttling each other Herzl easily ended the strife, and passed by enthusiastic acclamation the resolutions which had threatened to tear the delegates asunder.

Dr. Nordau, in his review, pointed out that never was a popular impression wider of the truth than that attributing riches to the Jews. The majority are to-day "accursed beggars." Everywhere where the Jews have settled in comparatively large numbers misery prevails. This misery has two forms—material and normal. In eastern Europe, north Africa and western Asia—the regions which shelter probably nine-tenths of the race—the misery is to be understood literally. It is the painful fight for bare existence.

Russia's five millions (half the total number of Jews in the world) are subjected to numerous legal restrictions, besides the connived-at oppression of officials and the cruelty of riotous mobs. Roumania's 150,000 suffer equally, and half of them are totally destitute; 75 per cent of the 775,000 Jews of Galicia are literally beggars; in Austria the law makes no distinction of creed, but the public authorities and custom disregard the acts of legislatures and erect old barriers; from Bukovina and Bulgaria come similar complaints; in Morocco and Persia the Jews live in daily fear of mob violence. Hungary alone treats the Jew fairly, but even there, subterranean indications provoke fear.

The Jews of western Europe are under no legal restrictions, and in the brief period of their emancipation have attained a moderate degree of prosperity. But among these Jews the moral misery prevails.

Here follow some characteristic observations from which these are reproduced verbatim:

"The western Jew has bread, but he does not live on bread alone. The life of the western Jew is no longer endangered through the enmity of the mob; but bodily wounds are not the only wounds that cause pain, and from which one may bleed to death. The western Jew meant emancipation to be real liberation, and hastened to draw the final consequences therefrom. But the nations made him feel that he erred in being so heedlessly logical. The magnanimous law magnanimously lays down the theory of equality of rights. But governments and society exercise the practice of equality of rights in a manner which renders it the same mockery as did the appointment of Sanchez Pansa to the splendid post of viceroy of the Island of Barataria.

"The Jew says naively: 'I am a human being, and I regard nothing human as alien.' The answer he gets is: 'Softly; your righteous man must be enjoyed cautiously; you lack the right notion of honor, feeling for duty, morality, patriotism, idealism. You must, therefore, hold aloof from all vocations which make possession of these qualifications as conditions.'

"No one has ever tried to justify these terrible accusations by facts. At most, now and then, an individual Jew, the scum of his race and of mankind, is triumphantly cited as an example, and, contrary to all laws of logic, the example is made general. This tendency is psychologically correct. It is the practice of human intellect to invent for the prejudices which sentiment has called forth a cause seemingly reasonable. Popular wisdom has long been acquainted with this psychological law, and puts it in very expressive words: 'If you want to draw a dog,' says the proverb, 'you must first declare him to be mad.' All kinds of vices are falsely attributed to the Jews, because one wishes to convince himself that he has a right to detect them. But the pre-existing sentiment is the detection of the Jews.

"It is only historical truth if we say that only the ghetto gave Jews the possibility to survive the terrible persecutions of the

middle ages. In the ghetto the Jew had his own world; it was to him the sure refuge which had for him the spiritual and moral value of a parental home. Here were associates by whom one wishes to be valued and also could be valued; here was the public opinion to be acknowledged by which was the aim of the Jew's ambition. To be held in low esteem by that opinion was the punishment of unworthiness. Here all specific Jewish qualities were esteemed, and through their special development that admiration was to be obtained which is the sharpest spur to the human mind. * * *

"Now came emancipation. The law assured the Jews that they were full citizens of their country. In its honeycomb it evoked also from Christians feelings which warmed and purified the heart. The Jews hastened, in a species of intoxication, as it were, to burn their boats. They had now another home; they no longer needed the ghetto; they had new other connections, and were no longer forced to associate with their co-religionists. * * * For one or two ages the Jew was allowed to believe that he was only German, French, Italian, etc.

"All at once, twenty years ago, after a slumber of thirty to sixty years, anti-Semitism once more broke out from the innermost depth of the nations, and revealed to the eyes of the mortified Jew his real situation, which he had no longer seen. He was still allowed to vote for members of parliament, but he saw himself excluded from the clubs and the meetings of his Christian fellow countrymen. He was allowed to go wherever he pleased, but everywhere he met with the inscription: 'No Jews admitted.' He had still the right of discharging all the duties of a citizen, but the nobler rights which are granted to talent and for achievements—those rights were absolutely denied to him.

"Such is the existing situation of the emancipated Jew in western Europe. He has given up his specifically Jewish character, but the peoples let him feel that he has not acquired their special characteristics. He has lost the home of the ghetto, but the land of his birth is denied to him as his home. He avoids his fellow Jew, because anti-Semitism has made him hateful. His countrymen repel him when he wishes to associate with them. He has no ground under his feet, and he has no community to which he belongs as a full member. With his Christian countrymen neither his character nor his intentions can reckon on justice, still less on kindly feeling. With his Jewish countrymen he has lost touch; necessarily he feels that the world hates him and he sees no place where he can find warmth when he seeks for it.

"This is the moral Jewish misery, which is more bitter than the physical, because it befalls men who are differently situated, prouder and possessed of finer feelings.

"One complains of Jews intruding everywhere, but only strive after superiority because they are denied equality. They are accused of a feeling of solidarity with the Jews of the whole world, whereas, on the contrary, it is their misfortune that as soon as the first loving word of emancipation had been uttered they tried to pluck from their hearts all the Jewish solidarity up to the last trace.

"The picture would not be complete if I did not add one point, a fiction, which is even believed by serious and educated men who need not necessarily be anti-Semites—viz., the assertion that the Jews possess all power and riches and hold the reins of government. How false this allegation is can be seen in the fact that these Jews are not even able to protect their fellow Jews against the murderous attacks of miserable Arabian and Persian tribes. The greater half of these Jews do not even own a stone on which to rest their heads, no rag to cover their nakedness. This is the scum which is added and the poison which is insidiously after hatred has wounded.

"It is true that there are several hundreds of over-rich Jews, whose ostentatious millions cause them to be widely noticed. What has Israel to do with these peoples? Most of them—I readily except a small minority—belong to the meanest nature of the Jewish race, whom natural selection has destined for callings in which millions, and sometimes milliards, are earned in a manner I will not mention. In a normal, completely Jewish society, these men, as a consequence of their characters, would occupy the lowest place in the esteem of the people, and in no case would they be ennobled and obtain the highest decorations with which Christian society has honored them. The Judaism of the prophets and the Talmud, the Judaism of Hillel, Philo, Ibn Gebirol, Jehuda Halevi, Spinoza, knew nothing about these money baggers, who think meanly of what we esteem and who think highly of what we despise.

"These people are the principal protests for the new Jew hatred, which has more economic than religious causes for its existence. For Judaism, which suffers on their account, they have never done anything, with the exception of throwing down stones—no sacrifice to them. For ideal purposes their help is never available. Many of them, therefore, leave Judaism. We wish them joy on their journey, and only regret that Jewish blood flows in their veins and that of the very scum.

"The governments and peoples should pause before they convert the Jews into a dangerous element, and they would have to regret it if they were obliged to annihilate them.

"That Jewish distress cries for help we have seen. To find that help will be the great work of this congress."